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I/GNEA, B/BXN, B/BRN, NEA/PPD, NEA/IPA FOR ALTERMEN  
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LONDON FOR GOLDRICH  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ

#### Summary

-- The lead story in all papers today, October 15, is on King Abdullah's meetings with senior officials in Singapore on the sidelines of the Asian Economic Summit. During his meeting with the President of Singapore, the King stressed his interest in developing the Port of Aqaba to serve Iraq and the region. All papers report international responses and criticisms to the draft U.S. resolution on Iraq and quote President Bush in statements to the U.S. TV station "Tribune Broadcasting" as saying that he shoulders the responsibility of his policy in Iraq. Papers also highlight developments in Iraq, reporting the suicide car bomb in front of the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad. On the Palestinian-Israeli front, papers reported that Israeli authorities raided Rafah again.

On the domestic front, all papers reported that the Jordanian cabinet approved the training of 32,000 Iraqi police at a cost of \$1.5 billion. Al-Arab Al-Yawm is the only paper that reported opposition by Chalabi's party to this decision.

#### Editorial Commentary on Iraq

##### -- "Meaningless Conferences"

Chief Editor Taher Udwan writes on the back page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (10/15): "Without a conviction by all parties in Iraq that the U.S. occupation is just temporary and not here to stay, chaos and bombings are just going to continue. Moreover, the Turkish military presence will be an incentive to expand the circle of domestic wars. In light of this fact, the conferences that are being held outside Iraq to discuss the reconstruction of Iraq are deemed meaningless. This is because they seem like venues for ministers from the Iraqi Governing Council to exercise their abilities to present proposals and ideas after it has been proven that they are marginalized and they can do nothing when they are in Baghdad because Administrator Bremer is there and he is everything and he only listens to ideas from Kissinger, Wolfowitz and Thomas Friedman."

##### -- "Turkey .. First"

Daily columnist Urayb Rintawi, who writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (10/15), maintains that Turkey's entry into Iraq could become a point for a strategic transformation in all contexts of the Iraqi crisis which is open to all sorts of possibilities. . . He says: "It is truly regrettable that Turkey's decision to cross the borders into Iraq as dictated by the United States comes at a time when Islamists are in power and in parliament. They shoulder the burden of a decision that could neither be taken by the(Turkish) military institution nor by its National Security Council."

Rintawi concludes by saying that during and after the war on Iraq, Turkey behaved on the basis of "Turkey First" .. He notes that self interest in both cases speaks out for it.

##### -- "The Phenomenon of Suicide Amongst the Ranks of the Occupation Forces . !!"

Commenting on reports in U.S. newspapers that the rate of suicide amongst U.S. soldiers in Iraq has gone up and that a team has been sent to Iraq to investigate the situation, columnist George Haddad writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour(10/15): "The influential ruling gang in

Washington - which is made up of oil, weapons, and Zionist mafias - does not care about the rise in the number of those in the occupation forces who get killed or those who commit suicide in as much as they care about keeping the American people in the dark and ignorant of what this gang is planning and doing in their name and in the name of their interests."

GNEHM